



## ESCALATING MILITARY OFFENSIVES THREATEN TO COLLAPSE THE PEACE PROCESS IN BURMA

**ENAC Briefing No. 19**  
**12 October 2016**

The Burma Army, also known as Tatmadaw, has escalated its military offensives against the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) with air strikes, artillery, and ground forces. Residents in Kachin State and Yangon as well as the Kachin diaspora in Thailand and the United States have staged protests, calling on the Tatmadaw to end its offensives immediately. On 30 September, the United States Embassy in Yangon also expressed its deep concern and urged “relevant authorities to adhere strictly to their responsibility to protect civilians.” This statement came one day before the Tatmadaw’s shelling killed a two-year-old Kachin girl and seriously injured two other children in Puwang village, northern Shan State. On 7 October, the local European Union office in Burma issued a statement, cautioning that the continued fighting “undermines the trust that is essential for advancing Myanmar peace process,” and called for “an immediate cessation of hostilities and a return to constructive dialogue.”

In a statement on 8 October, the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the political wing of the KIA, and a non-signatory to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), stated that the Tatmadaw “must be held responsible and be fully accountable for all the adverse consequences of its offensive war,” accusing it of “undermining and interrupting the genuine peace process” and warning that the Tatmadaw’s excessive use of force will intensify the civil war in Burma as the Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) are trying to seek political solutions by political means. On the same day, the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) also condemned the offensives and called on the Burma Army to stop using force and resolve political problems through negotiation. The UNFC, of which the KIO is a member, is an alliance of EAOs that have not signed the NCA.

In its 9-point proposal to the government, the UNFC affirmed its commitment to signing the NCA once a prior agreement is reached with the government on the strengthening of the code of conduct and monitoring mechanism within the NCA and the Framework for Political Dialogue is reviewed to reflect more inclusiveness and better representation.

Despite all these public calls for ceasing the fighting, the Burma Army shows no sign of deescalating hostilities in Kachin State. More air strikes against the KIA’s Gideon Post and Lai Hpawng Post were reported near Laiza, the KIO Headquarters. The State Counselor and the government of Burma have been silent on the matters.

In addition to its ongoing offensives against the KIA in Kachin and northern Shan States, the Tatmadaw has also clashed with the NCA signatory Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), and launched attacks against the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army in and around the control areas of Karen National Union, another NCA signatory. These activities by the Tatmadaw not only undermine the efforts of various parties toward sustainable peace in Burma but also pose grave dangers to the fragile peace process and could easily collapse the process. For the sake of peace, reconciliation and democracy in Burma, the Tatmadaw must halt all of its offensives, avoid clashes and start building trust for a political dialogue to take place.